

Table 5 List of Action Options with Clarification for Region 3 Virtual

Triggering Question: "What are action options for your region, which, if adopted and implemented, will overcome barriers and help us create a sustainable model of assistive technology to support students in accessing and progressing in the general education curriculum?"

Action Option 1: TEACHER PREP

Work with universities in teacher prep programs so that pre-service teachers have this information.

Q: Kathy, what do you mean by 'work'? Are thinking AT people should be guest speakers for a course, teach a course, consult with professors to add AT into what they are teaching?? What do you have in mind?

A: All of those. At is not a very big part of sp ed teacher prep let alone general ed teacher prep. In my experience speech therapists and OT's have little training. Working with universities to figure out how to do this would be important. It's a shame to hire folks and have to start the training process even with new people--they should have some background.

Action Option 2: COPYRIGHT

.Advocate for change in copyright laws to make it easier to provide digital text to all students who need it.

C: Please explain briefly.

Q: Can you give one or 2 examples of how we can advocate? If we were to make this one of our action options to work on, where would we start? HOW can Region 3 do this?

C: FYI - there is a significant effort at the national and international level to address copyright law. As you might imagine this is not an easy issue to resolve...Even if copyright laws are amended there will be restrictions on who can access.

www.copyright.gov/fedreg/2009/74fr52507.pdf Perhaps violating rules of engagement, we can advocate by being proactive with our purchasing agreements - purchasing content that is accessible from the start will eliminate eligibility criteria and align with current educational initiatives. Additional info: <http://www.daisy.org/planet-2010-06#a1>

Q: Kathi-does this align with what you were thinking? California's open source textbook initiative - <http://about.ck12.org/> They are in discussions to possibly include TTS and I believe they've worked with Bookshare on a limited basis to make the content accessible.

C: There is no violation of rules of engagement by advocating a policy position or commenting on an existing policy as part of the commentary. It is critiquing other people's contributions that violates the rules of engagement. We encourage comments that enhance the knowledge base of the participants.

A: There is a mismatch between the district's obligation under the IDEA to provide those necessary accommodations (relative to AT) to all students who need them and the definitions of who is eligible and how they become eligible under copyright law provisions. I believe that the position of the IDEA is more appropriate to students with disabilities and determining their needs through the IEP process rather than eligibility for digital text being determined through a physician, etc

C: This is definitely a gray area. If the print disability is the result of blindness, a visual impairment or physical limitation then the IEP team can determine eligibility. If it's a reading disability as a result of an organic dysfunction (undefined...) then it has to be diagnosed by a physician. RFB&D and Bookshare have long served students with learning disabilities under physical limitations. That said, it's a districts decision as to what they determine eligibility under.

C: Thank you Jeff for your content contributions as the sponsor of the project and a stakeholder although you were not a participant in colab I.

Action Option 3: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ONGOING SUPPORT

We need to integrate more technology in our classrooms. However, many new teachers and experienced teachers are still using old methods, because we don't have the time to learn, use and troubleshoot our way through technology. It would also serve to include PD that shows how AT levels the playing field and can make a substantial difference in someones education.

C: Thank you. this is a good model for others to follow in responding to the triggering question.

Also it is highly desirable to respond in the context of the statewide vision map and the barriers map you identified in your colab I. in other words, as Jeff explained at the start of our colab, please try to come up with action options that overcome the barriers and approximate the vision of an ideal AT description at the state level.

Q: Does this tie to the WOW Factor or do you mean all AT devices should include a how it levels the playing field component in the PD?

A: Yes, Special Education is supposed to level the playing field for those that have disabilities, many see the AT devices as "not fair" We need to get away from that type of thinking.

Action Option 4: WEBSITE/BLOG/WIKI

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Develop a "place" for AT Consultants to share information about AT Tools/resources and how they have used them that could be used by SE staff for information.

Q: I am not familiar with the acronym SE, who is SE staff?

C: Good question for clarification. Thanks.

A: Special Education

A: I was trying to indicate that there should be a website or blog or wiki (not sure the format) that people who are experts in AT (ie the AT consultants around the state) could share information about the products that they have tried and used--a review of them. This could be organized by device or software. There is so much out there that it seems this would save time and expense in looking for and trying things that may not work.

C: I believe that Kindy has an "AT Workspace" set up through the KISD website for just this purpose. Lots of information on AT resources are available. Perhaps members of this CoLab could get access to this and check it out for further clarification?

Action Option 5: STOP MAKING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SO 'SPECIAL'

In training with teams they need to understand that assistive technology is included under the umbrella of instructional technology. All staff may be more willing to embrace it as just a part of what we need to do if we stop making it so "special".

Q: Does this mean train with a UDL focus since AT is IEP driven?

A: I think that would be a fair statement.

Action Option 6: CREATION OF DATA FORMS/SAMPLES TO BETTER 'STANDARDIZE' DATA COLLECTION

I think more direction on this would be helpful as often times I think there is confusion on the types of data that need to be collected in order to see that the technology is doing what it is intended to do. Needs to be simple and to the point.

Q: Does this tie with Option 16 data decision list?

Action Option 7: ESTABLISHING MINIMUM COMPETENCIES IN BASIC ASSISTIVE TECH KNOWLEDGE FOR ALL TEACHING STAFF

Establish minimum competencies in major areas of AT that staff need to be exposed to help students progress in the curriculum. (Name changed from Professional Development by author)

Q: Can you define minimum competencies? Since AT is IEP driven what would global competencies look like?

A: I think there are enough resources out there that have targeted what some minimum competencies might be that we could draw from--perhaps from WATI, Texas Technology folks, etc... For example having knowledge of word prediction, making text accessible

Action Option 8: ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR BUDGETARY SUPPORT FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Districts seem to be funding more mainstream instructional technologies but need to set aside some funding for AT that may be more specialized.

C: Can you be more specific? (State mandate guidelines/ % of spec ed \$ / % of tech \$ in general) What are your thoughts?

Action Option 9: PRESENT TO SCHOOL BOARDS

It has been my observation that if it is important to the board members, it will be a priority in your district.

Boards generally schedule 10-20 presentations at their meetings to keep themselves apprised of initiatives in their buildings.

Ensuring that AT successes are shared on a regular basis will help take the elite persona from AT use. At every board meeting I have been to the board asks - what can we do to help?? Talk about opening a window :)

Action Option 10: NAME CHANGE-HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR

We spoke about instructional technology vs assistive technology but I would submit that we need to paint the technology horse a different color.

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The term technology breeds many dark images: for administrators technology conveys images of big money, for teachers technology conveys images of ALOT of extra time & work (all for one kid), for para's technology conveys images of well – technology :)

I believe painting the AT horse a nice shade of Universal Design would go a long way in getting all stakeholders to feel better about and embrace this support. Universal Design is a goal administrators feel good about targeting as it is perceived as more of a concept/ mindset that an actual thing with actual costs. Universal Design is a goal teachers can embrace as it targets all kids, leaving those "I have to do all this for one kid" thoughts behind. Universal Design is representative of using tools (low & high tech), which reduces para dependence a goal every para is proud to see their students achieve.

C: I also think that AT is just a branch of the Tech Department. Districts will do a lot to support/maintain their tech department.... so shouldn't AT be a part of that as well, not separate and lonely???

Action Option 11: IMPLEMENT IEP PROCESS CHANGE

am familiar with the SETT process so this is what I will suggest, although I am sure there are others out there. Right now AT is a box to be checked on an IEP, teams are limited to what they are familiar with as AT options to consider ergo the box quickly gets checked/considered and the team moves on. (How can we consider what we are not familiar with after all). Unless they are fortunate enough to have an AT specialist at the table.

SETT with an accompanying resource like http://www.texasat.net/docs/Writing_Teclinks_Oct_10.pdf can help make options known to teams regardless of the individuals at the table. (Teams when reviewing options may be surprised to learn what is already in their building)

PARENT COMMENT - SETT would go a LONG WAY towards bringing dialog into the "standard based IEPs" (talk about checking the box!

Q: I have 3 places I need clarification. Are you saying:

- 1) we need to change the IEP form?*
- 2) we need to change the actual IEP meeting to include SETT?*
- 3) team members need more info before they sit at the table for an IEP?*

A: 1) No, we do not need to change the form (that happens enough already :o)

2) Yes, I am saying including the SETT process would be a MAJOR aide in focusing on curriculum input/ student output. IEP's generally focus on 2/3 goals which are usually addressed in silo's with little generalizaion. The SETT process leads us to the thought that skills are to be generalized and that there is a tool to be sought.

I would go as far as to say IEP are goal focused/ SETT are student focused.

3) Resource Lists to reference when thinking of possible tools will give IEP teams a first round of idea's to launch from instead of relaying on what we already know when at the table (which often does not open the AT window).

My ideal, BEFORE a team sits @ the IEP table, a blank SETT is disbursed to the team with the students day plugged in, team members pencil in their data/grades/observations/thoughts & ideas could includes suggestions for communication, behavior, goals, tools whatever is appropriate for that student). At the meeting everyone's individual SETT is compiled to make a Student SETT for the meeting and the IEP is built from that compiled sharing of information. SETT helps us generalize supports across the day.

Q: I'm not sure how to form this question exactly.... but it has to do with the role of the administrators in this process....and the district's "don't open a can of worms" attitude by "checking the AT box." Sped teachers can get very dirty looks if even mentioning AT to parents..... Does your action plan include how to deal with this issue? Or could this be a different action item?

A: Yes, I too have felt the cold cruel glance of a glare. I think that many of the action items already being discussed speak to that paradigm shift. (common vision/courting CD & Boards, name change from AT to UDL to dispell that notion of AT=big \$\$\$) It's like we all got new carpet in our living room and now we are not allowed to walk on it. AT is here, it's just a matter of making it ok to use! Tammy, I forgot to mention the homework workshops. I think that is an action item that gives info to parents and empowers staff to start to use what they already have access too. It would be KEY to have staff help facilitate workshops as a backdoor to sharing information

Action Option 12: HIRE IEP FACILITATORS

Expand and improve team intensions by adding a team member who can help present options and clarify expectations in the IEP. Could be a part of a SETT or UDL initiative. It's a sad truth that if it is not in the IEP it does not happen. And often even if it is in the

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IEP if it's not monitored it still does not happen) With a good face, this initiative could help drive change, although I would make it time limited, (3-5 year project) as teams should learn to adapt to a new IEP process and be successful without a facilitator over time. Facilitators could also take on a IEP management role, ensuring supports are utilized and meaningful (addressing the drop and dash stigma) For reasons unknown to me team members many times doesn't call for assistance or perceive they have and don't push for more help. The facilitator role could help remove those unknown barriers, ensuring AT and other supports are utilized as intended.

- ergo manage the plan

Action Option 13: RESOURCES DIRECTORY

Create an easy to use options resource list by disability/needs with references if possible. (when I say references I mean someone in the area USING the resource that can be a resource) (IE) http://www.texasat.net/docs/Writing_Teclinks_Oct_10.pdf It's nice to know what is available but its ten time better to talk to someone that has already used it!

Action Option 14: UDL-A.T. MENTORS (SITE VISITS)

Not unlike the new teacher model a structured mentor model for UDL-AT-Team Teaching makes sense. I believe that this program should without fail incorporate release time for site visits. After all teachers (& parents) are hands-on visual learners too!

Action Option 15: WOW FACTOR-WHAT THAT CAN LOOK LIKE

Spotlight the goal at Professional Development. For me that happened when I attended a presentation of the West Michigan Inclusion Network and saw mother & son, Erin & Curtis Cunningham present. They did a tremendous job sharing before AT/ after AT impact, how grade level curriculum is adapted and ways knowledge is demonstrated. I would suggest that a vision of what we are shooting for is an annual PD opportunity (one that is required of new teachers especially) If you can't get the Cunningham's to present, I'm sure you all know a family in your districts or resa's that has built a good example of "what that can look like" who would be happy to share their story.

C: Good point! I think that including parents and students in the "training" and "look at how well this works!" aspects is critical. People tend to use what they know works for others.

Action Option 16: DATA DECISION LIST

When choosing a tool to address a task, team should determine what will be measured to determine if changes in performance occurred –A data decision list should be part of every SETT/IEP discussion so teams can pick one data point. QUALITY, QUANTITY, INDEPENDENCE, ACCURACY, SPONTANEITY, SPEED, FREQUENCY, DURATION, LATENCY. (I took this from the Texas Assistive Technology Network)

Action Option 17: SLOW AND STEADY CONCEPT BUILDING-PARADIGM SHIFT

When looking at the barrier chart, most my action responses evolved around the concepts of SETT/IEP building, UDL, backdoor influencers and small hits of training. For me the barriers represented a tree to tall to climb in a day. I think small chunks that provide a view will promote teams to continue the climb for the sheer exhilaration of success. I feel slow and steady is the best way to get stakeholders to climb the mighty oak

Action Option 18: PREP TIME

Staff needs time (time = \$) to prepare for UDL / co-teaching / AT opportunities. This includes funded time in the summer BEFORE school starts! (staff means gen ed/spec ed & para's)

Action Option 19: CLEAR EXPECTATIONS OF USE

IEP team needs to define use and document that in the IEP to combat the drop & dash vision and when tech should be permitted visions of AT. (IE) word prediction software for all written work in excess of 3 sentences. Calculator for all problems comprised of double + digits. Pre-teach Science concepts/vocabulary 100%.

Action Option 20: COMMON VISION

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Establish an educational vision that all stakeholders embrace to support student performance.

Q: Is that vision UDL, can you give an example of what you mean?

Q: Who would create the vision? Would each stakeholder group be involved?

C: The vision requirements have been established at the state level. In the Regional AT laboratories sponsored by MITS we have made the assumption that the Regional vision for AT is not different from the State-wide vision. Jeff's presentation at the opening of Colaboratory I tried to make this transparent.

C: I would like to Jeff to chime in on this too. Pam's statement is an 'educational vision' I'm wondering Pam, how/if you are distinguishing education from AT services.

C: It would be good for Jegg to enter this discussion because it is contextual and he is the sponsor of this work. In my experience everything we do is contextual, and if we change the context we have to rearrange the deck chairs in the Titanic more frequently.

C: Good discussion. I would prefer to reserve comment until we hear further clarification from Pam. Generically speaking, the state board of education has adopted "Universal Education" policy that provides a vision to educate ALL students. NCLB strengthened this notion with high expectations for all students (albeit with controversial methods...) and IDEA followed. I think a vision exists for the broader system of education. The breakdown occurs with the methods to achieve the goal [systems change]. If referring specifically to a vision for AT services, Aleco is correct in that that was established in the spring with representatives from around the state. This colab is intended to focus on the Regional Level and what Reg. 3 can do to improve AT Services within the context of the broader vision.

C: Thank you very much Jeff for your crucial clarification on the process we are implementing with the MITS sponsorship.

Q: To clarify this in my head Jeff, you are stating that an educational vision has already been adopted by the State, "Universal Education". Soooo, Pam's action option would speak to "embracing" that vision. I would have to ask then for a copy of, or direction to review that Universal Education Policy as it is something I am not familiar with. My question becomes are others aware of this policy? I have been advised that I cannot request Universal Design for my son as it is a methodology and as we all know, parents can not mandate a method. Is there more ferretting to be done with regard to a "Common Vision"?

C: The AT vision that I was referring to can be found in: <http://mits-at.wikispaces.com/Influence+Mapping>

C: Educational vision can be found

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/UnivEdBrochureFINAL_incl_152066_7_Glossary_03-02-06a.pdf this policy has been in place for a number of years and been shared frequently. That being said, obviously there are some who remain unaware and we should work to improve awareness.

I think only Pam can say whether the option she posed was about embracing this particular policy.

Any number of methodologies could be supportive of reaching the goal to educate all students as posed in the Universal Education vision of the state board. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a pedagogical framework that is certainly supportive of this goal but it also requires systems change. Currently UDL is an emerging promising practice based on evidence but little to no research actually exists on the framework as a whole. There is a national effort to push UDL into policy (ESEA) but without addressing the theory to implementation gap we run the risk of maintaining status quo. Recently an international group met to address implementation, identification of critical elements, and the need for a robust research agenda around UDL - expect more in the coming months...

Q: Ahhh. ok. In light of this discussion and my new understanding of terminology and policy I would like to rephrase each time I reference UDL to Universal Education across this wiki. The Principles of Universal Education and Influence Pattern of Vision Requirements lead me to believe that a Common Vision is outside the IEP, but AT for all students. Is that where your common vision goes Pam?

Action Option 21: HAVING MORE DIRECTION AS TO WHO SHOULD BE ON ASSISTIVE TECH TEAMS

These teams need to be made up of gen ed., special ed teachers, instructional technology staff, SLP's, curriculum directors, administrators, AT consultants, OT/PT's to name a few. Teams need to have release time to meet on a regular basis to be able to co-ordinate training/activities for their districts.

Q: As AT is IEP driven, do you mean teams are kid driven or are you talking UDL/ high frequency tool teams?

Q: Mirroring Maureen's question to some extent, by AT teams comprised by staff members who might be working with a student AND administrators: are you talking about these teams overseeing AT from an administrative standpoint or are you talking about individual AT assessments?

A: I mean that if we have compiled a targeted list of possible members of a district AT team at a minimum that districts can use as a

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model that might help make for better more well-rounded teams. The teams are student driven as if a student doesn't have any access issues then you wouldn't need the team's O.T. I like the idea of calling it a UDL team! I would hope the team could work together with the overseeing administrator whoever that might be but primarily I am talking about individual assessments.

Action Option 22: CURRICULUM DIRECTORS

Provide PD to Curriculum Directors about AT for instruction. Best way to reach its use in the general curriculum.

C: Please offer a brief explanation of the meaning and intent of this action option that you are contributing so that other members of the group will understand.

Q: Are you suggesting separate training for Curriculum Directors? Do we need to delineate between concept/impact training vs high frequency tool / implementation training with different target audience?

A: I'm saying that curriculum directors lead efforts to change or improve instruction in a district. If we teach them about the options and benefits of AT, I feel we may have more widespread interest in its use. I guess I don't have an opinion about whether it is a separate training at this point but to somehow focus on them.

Q: Maureen: If in light of this clarification you would like to propose a new and different action option at this point please feel free to do so

A: No new action option, but thank you for helping me to understand.

C: I think that different ISD's have different administrative teams that drive change. CD's may not be one of them. We have some districts that don't really have a CD, or the CD is also the Spec. Ed director or the superintendent. In Allegan we may want to provide PD to Principals. Because AT has been changing so much, and in light of our work at the regional level (and state) I think we all should be trying to get scheduled for a 10 or 15 minute sharing time at any administrative meeting we can get into!

Action Option 23: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Regional projects could be created to create a data base of resources to be utilized state wide. (Ex. Region III could create a data base of visual supports)

C: Establish a protocol support skills for all teachers, evaluate everyone and begin web based training to meet the need.

C: Is this a question to Pam or a new contribution? Questions for clarification of the meaning of the contributions by the authors will be entertained when we implement Round 2 of the wiki. If it is a new contribution please enter it in the right place with the same of a similar title for the idea.

Q: Can we compile from data bases that already exist (ie Texas Assistive Tech Network). Are you talking Tool/Training or Resource list?

Q: Have we been able to resolve the question of whether we have two different ideas under this title or not yet? Also I have seen the title Professional Development used by another author. Are the meanings among these two contributions distinguishable, and if so I would suggest the Knowledge Management Team takes the initiative to make such a distinction in the titles.

Action Option 24: ALLOCATE MONEY

State needs to provide \$ for UDL/AT for ALL staff, not just special ed (doing otherwise is contrary to their 80% of the kids 80% of the time mandate)

C: I have spent many a pay free evening, weekend etc. doing what I am required to do by my job.

Action Option 25: HOME COMPUTER AND HOME WORK WORKSHOPS

Home Computer, Homework Workshops – Conduct homework workshops for parents that provides instruction on googling your way to curriculum concepts and mastery. Conduct these in your district building computer labs and ask your para's and teachers to help facilitate (back door into their buy-in) Make special invitation to families with student with IEP's but certainly this should be open to gen ed families too!! (Hey Roseanne, I think there is a job opportunity for me in this suggestion :)

C: Parent Training is fun and exciting, besides kids parents can be fun to work with. This will establish better relations between school and parents.

Action Option 26: SHOW AND TELL (7 MINUTES TO SUCCESS)

ALL Professional Development should include a seven minute exposure lesson on Universal Design. Pick an area of support, show them what it looks like and tell them where to find a resource (again when I say resource I mean someone who is using that tool) I

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can't think of anyone in education that wants to take another initiative, but everyone seems able to take just one little bite, especially if it looks tasty!

C: and provide opportunity to dig deeper into a tool or strategy

C: This amendment of the statement should only be allowed if Maureen accepts it. That will take place in Round 2.

Action Option 27: CREATE MORE WEB-BASE TRAINING TO BETTER TRAIN STAFF

Whether this comes down from the region or state it would be helpful to have some kind of Virtual School in AT/instructional technology that was highly organized and addressed the high incidence tools that students may need most.

C: with a high level expected implementation on the part of the participants

C: Same comment as before. We are not allowed to add to other people's contributions without their approval. We encourage to generate your own statements, however.

Action Option 28: EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Establishment of textbook adoption statewide, with requirements that all materials must be accessible to all students.

Action Option 29: MATERIALS PURCHASING

Establish purchasing agreements with publishers/producers of content related materials that they be made available to all students. (name changed from Educational Materials #2 by author)

Action Option 30: UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING/ASSISTIVE TECH TOOLBOX

Establish a "must have" tool box consisting of generic options for supporting students. text readers, spelling supports, visual supports, literacy supports. Take a look at the MITS freedom stick as place to start from. (name changed from educational materials #3)

Action Option 31: EDUCATE THE ADMINISTRATION

Educating the admin. and the school board with how AT can assist students meet their potential.

Action Option 32: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAMS

Provide professional development related to integrating technology into the curriculum that has both general education and special education input.

Action Option 33: PROPOSE A PLAN

Propose a plan to admin. so they are aware of the time commitment by all staff involved to create successful program with AT.

Q: Do you have a sample plan in mind?

C: It is OK to make a proposal for an action option and not be able to elaborate it in terms of an example. So if you do not have a sample plan in mind, as Maureen is asking, it is OK to say you do not have one in mind.

Action Option 34: TEAM IMPLEMENTATION

The team idea should consist of Curriculum Director, Assistive Technology Coord., Building Technology Specialist, and District Technology Specialist

C: Do all areas have Building Tech & District Tech specialist? Team implementation of what - PD, use Please expand.

A: In our county, each of the locals have a curriculum director, and a district Tech. Specialist. This team has no connection to Assistive Tech. for the county but should, in my opinion

Action Option 35: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION/COLLABORATION

Work with directors of special education to identify key contact staff in each local district (or maybe even every building - wishful thinking!) with whom AT "specialists" could share training opportunities, information, and resources.

C: think this should happen at local district inservice and/or PD days

Q: Can this sharing extend to parents & principals? Are you thinking like a call tree or the more the merrier?

A: I see it as more than sharing. This would be an effort to move away from the expert model as these key contact people from the

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local districts are identified and included in discussions about AT, assessment processes, training on new tools and resources, whatever information is being gathered and shared by the ISD's AT team.

Action Option 36: USE WIKI AS A TRAINING TOOL

Create or maintain a Wiki resource center to support AT and/or UDL. Use of this Wiki as a starting point from which AT training or consultation starts will hopefully provide gentle reminders and new discoveries!

Q: Do you mean as a supplementary support or main training tool?

A: The Wiki can be used as the starting point for most training and discussions. This demonstrates to all in attendance where they can go to find the information or links to a tool or additional online training at a later time. While they are there, they may just discover other treasures that can be used to make their lessons more accessible.

Action Option 37: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

When AT seminars are conducted at the local ISDs, use film and powerpoints that can be converted to Webinars to be shared accross ISDs. Teachers can view these webinars to learn how to use AT in their classrooms.

Q: Can these webinar / powerpoint opportunities be listed permanantly on RESA web sites under PD AT or both?

A: The webinar/powerpoint access opportunities could be listed on RESA websites as both PD and AT. Whatever avenue(s) are needed to get the information out to as many teachers and other staff as possible. iTunes U under the Michigan Education site may be another option.

Action Option 38: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Establish uniform assessment/evaluation tool(s) to be used accross ISDs that can be used to assess effectiveness of the AT that is used

Action Option 39: ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS

Determine minimum standards of AT for schools region-wide as a goal for school districts to persue so that all schools have at least a base-line of AT options for teachers/ students.

Q: Do you have an example of minimum standards in mind?

C: Jim: If you do not have an example it is OK. If you do please share it because it will help the clarification.

A: I do not have specific standards. However, I do recall the comment when we met that some schools in an ISD may have more AT then others in the same ISD. What comes to mind is a minimum number of desktop or laptop computers to be used by students. Perhaps an average per student that can be used. Perhaps a certain number of spell checkers per classroom? A minimum number of certain AT devices per ISD? Just some possible examples. Other ideas are welcome.

Action Option 40: FREQUENT BUT SHORT TRAININGS ON ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Incorporate a short AT training piece into meetings already scheduled, such as monthly staff meetings. Ten minutes or so - a tool or strategy, several examples of how it could be incorporated into lessons, brainstorm other possible uses, and a contact person if questions arise. Follow up feedback?

Action Option 41: ESTABLISH ASSISTIVE TECH OR UDL FOR ADMINISTRATORS AS A PORTION OF OUR REGIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We currently offer IEP's for administrators once or twice annually at an ISD level. This could be a model for PD to increase knowledge and awareness among decision makers.

Action Option 42: DEVELOP MODEL OF TRAINING/INSTRUCTION FOR AT/UDL FOR LOCAL UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

Collaboratively develop an outline or an overview of training for teacher education programs. These should broken into modules for the hour introduction, one-time class guest instructor, semester-long course, etc.

Action Option 43: DEVELOP A DATABASE OF ONLINE/DIGITAL PD THAT'S ALREADY AVAILABLE

Many archived webinars, tutorials, etc. are available free online. Our region could research and uncover the best of these and post or link to them for all regional staff.

Q: Great to have available, would this be monintored to assess impact for continued updating?

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Triggering Question: "What are action options for your region, which, if adopted and implemented, will overcome barriers and help us create a sustainable model of assistive technology to support students in accessing and progressing in the general education curriculum?"

Q: Would this be a wiki or Google Site that could folks from around the region could add to as they find stuff?

A: I don't have a particular format in mind. Ideally, if there is a common digital space that we all use, and is a central location for resources (a wiki possibly?) these could be linked there, with additions from everyone.

Monitoring would be essential to ensure high quality and current content.

Action Option 44: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Create a system in school districts where there is reliable, sustainable professional development either for new AT, new ways to use old AT, or "best practice" workshops. In district is often more easily attended than out of district

Action Option 45: BUILDING LEVEL BUY IN

The people who will make the biggest impact will be classroom teachers, the implementers of tech, and also our biggest advocates. We need to find a way to get more gen. ed. teachers involved.

Involve general education teachers in training and AT discussions to increase buy-in and increase implementation

Action Option 46: FUNDING

Funding from governmental agencies is not always reliable. It would benefit schools to see if they can get grants/ AT from tech companies that market in the area. Local grants can be written for AT.

Investigate local grants for purchasing AT (both local and big-business opportunities)

Action Option 47: IMPLEMENT PROCEDURES

Implementing procedures to address high incidence AT needs, student specific AT needs and self-contained AT needs will help overcome barriers to create a sustainable model to support students access both general and special education curriculum. High incidence student needs might be met through the availability of software/devices addressing specific reading/writing/math goals. Student specific referrals might take more effort in determining the area(s) of need and accessing specific AT devices/software. Self-contained AT needs might be addressed through implementation of specific AT/AAC needs in the classroom.

Q: Are you thinking we would create sample forms, or flow charts to follow to make procedures more uniform in these areas?

Action Option 48: EDUCATE GENERAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS ON ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Educate principals on the importance of assistive / instructional technology in the classroom and UDL; encourage principals to facilitate general education assistive / instructional technology trainings at the building level.

Action Option 49: ALLOT SUFFICIENT TIME FOR ASSISTIVE TECH

AT needs to be prioritized, as to allow sufficient time for facilitators to develop quality programming and pursue financing

Q: how are you thinking we could impact this?

Action Option 50: AWARENESS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TRAINING FOR ALL EDUCATION STAFF

Awareness Assistive Technology training for all (Special Education and General Education) staff not just special education.

Action Option 51: BEST PRACTICE-PD ALERTS

Since AT is IEP driven, not all staff needs or is provided access to the same tools at the same time, given that, a best practice could be to issue a PD Alert when a tool is being launched for a student. Staff area wide would have the opportunity to learn about the upcoming training for the new tool and seek consent to participate in that students training. IE an iTouch is being purchased for a Allegan student and the AT specialist has scheduled training. The PD alert would be issued, and picked up by a Berrien teacher who is interested in using the same tool. Consent would be obtained to address and FERPA issues, opening the door for in-dept training on a more global basis.

Q: How should the PD Alerts be issued? I love this idea but am concerned that people won't get the alert. Maybe we need more than one way to send it out...email/listserv as well as regional wiki. Because I'm from a county that only has 1 AT person I find getting info to the locals is difficult. I know there are people doing AT in Allegan that aren't aware of me and I'm not aware of them. Sad isn't it? This discussion (with myself because I haven't posted this yet) has led me to think of a new Action Option. "Establish an effective way to get AT info to the locals."

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A: I suppose alerts would be best if they were disbursed electronically. (send to districts with staff dissemination from that point) (I am assuming they already have the capacity to notify staff on a broad basis) Some kind of Tech Train that lets staff know when an PD opportunity is becoming available.

C: One of the keys to making this effective is to let Gen. Ed. staff know what the device or tool allows students to do...etc. In this way, Gen. Ed. staff that are unaware of certain tools might want to join the PD Alert

Action Option 52: DEVELOP UDL BEST PRACTICE INITIATIVES FOR PRINCIPALS/ ADMINISTRATORS

Provide LOCAL resource options like the Whole Schooling Consortium

(www.coe.wayne.edu/wholeschooling/WS/Trainig-consuld/MP/MichaelIP.html) so districts have options to dip into intensive training on their timetable.

Action Option 53: DEVELOP UDL BEST PRACTICE INITIATIVES AT THE BUILDING LEVEL

Similar to the Train the Trainer approach used by START (modules could include SETT/IEP, Resource Data Base, High Incidence Tools, Tips & Tricks)

Action Option 54: ATTEND STATE FUNDED SUMMER CAMP

Develop a week long summer camp for staff to bring teams to walk through a comprehensive planning program to develop and launch UDL/AT at the building/district level.

Action Option 55: LAUNCH COHORTS FOR UDL/AT

Invite a small select group of districts to train on UDL/AT/co-teaching/inclusion. (similar to how miBLISi go it's wings)

Action Option 56: DETERMINE TECHNICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Tech HAS to be turn-key for the classroom.

Determination of where the responsibility lies to make it so needs to be made clear between RESA AT's and district tech staff.

Teachers are going to give up quick if they are required to run down clitches, they need someone to hand off too that will follow-up and resolve issues.

C: Are you talking about computer/network tech support or AT support? Or both?

C: I was wondering the same thing...sometimes we are blurring the line between AT and Instruction Technology and I love it!

A: I am thinking in tiers

1st dermination of responsibilities if for Computer/network tech support (that should take place now)

2nd detmination is AT support (right now that primarily is on the resa's but as PD is provided and AT takes hold a determination of those responsibilities will have to be established to ensure tech remains turn key for teachers. That may mean district tech gets implmentation training along side teachers to support devise/resource.

Action Option 57: INCREASE ACCESS TO LAPTOPS

Gen Ed rooms need laptops IN THE ROOM for kids to access DAILY. Laptops need to be able to go home with kids if that is their work out-put method.

Action Option 58: ALLOW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SITE VISITS

Staff needs to be able to visit locations who are doing it well. (UDL/AT) Telling someone how and showing someone how changes the learning curve and buy-in expotentailly.

Action Option 59: MITS CONSULTANTS HELP

MITS consultants to come and do evaluations and assist with trainings at the district level because it seems like the barriers are time

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and money and both are so hard to come by.

C: Currently MITS has no consultants, so are you suggesting that they use some of their funds to hire them? They used to have this model, and it was disbanded under the concept of doing away with the 'expert' model...

A: Yes, If they could hire and assist us that would be great! If not, then I guess that is what I am saying we need to come up with a way that we can help support each other more.

Action Option 60: ALLOCATE MONEY DIFFERENTLY

Offer local mini grants from ISD funds that would typically go towards tools/lending library but this time focus more on sustainable issues. i.e. Require use of data to implement technology. Data should revolve around student achievement not just use of tool. Include funds for subs for multiple days throughout the year, coaching, find a way to share results electronically so ideas can be replicated and make sure to include a celebration to show off in front of admins and parents...a showcase or poster session of sorts.

C: We have been successful with this model. We even take suggestions from teachers!

A: I learned it from you guys and Ottawa. We allocate some of my budget so it's not new money

Action Option 61: CUSTOMIZE/STEAL SUCCESSFUL AT MODELS/EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

There are AT models out there that work. Lets look at Georgia, Wisconsin, Qiat, etc and make them work for us.

Q: Can Texas be added to that list? I'm no tech girl and I found that very easy to access and follow

A: Sure, I think we should look at a variety of materials at the Regional level and pull all the good stuff from them to meets our needs, then have local ISD's look at it, tweak it as necessary and adapt it. The buy-in at the local level should help in implementing.

Action Option 62: DIFFERENTIATE ASSISTIVE TECH TRAININGS

We need to do a better job of meeting the needs of adult learners. There are solid research based techniques for sustainable PD and we should be using those techniques in our trainings. A small group of trainers from Region 3 should develop a template for lack of a better word to help guide PD that will meet the needs of different learners and allow PD to be sustainable so that teachers actually change the way they are teaching and working with their students. It's going to take more than one training to change behavior.

Q: Do I understand you saying that we need to model UDL strategies in our PD sessions, and be very direct about pointing this out to the teachers?

A: Yes, but also we need to develop some trainings and teach other AT people how to train using UDL/DI strategies. Not all AT people have a strength in training others. We need to become better trainers which means including good strategies when we train. If we create models/templates with good strategies/ideas then others can use them.

Q: What are the solid research based techniques, can you give some examples?

A: research has shown (can't quote the source right now) that if you want a teacher to apply what they have learned in a workshop/training then they need to be exposed to the concept and see it being modeled, then they need to practice it with low risk feedback. To get most teachers to apply what they have learned they need to practice with a coach and peers who are doing the same thing. We typically still just provide raw information and don't allow time for practice or go back into the room and help by coaching or allow peer evaluations of staff using the technology. I'm not saying its an easy thing to do but I am saying that those of us who are noticing that are teachers need to change their behavior then we have to ask ourselves are we providing the right types/amount of training.

Action Option 63: GENERAL ED FRIENDLY TRAININGS

We need trainings online, F2F and blended. We should be using Gen Ed friendly terms and present at major AT conference/workshops and advertise for Gen Ed participants. CTG and ATIA should have a gen ed strand just like MACUL has a special ed/UDL strand.

Q: Are you thinking we would create some of the PD materials in our region and submit proposals to present at the national conferences? Or would we try to work with organizers of these conferences to consider UDL/Gen Ed strands?

A: Both Kindy. I'm not sure how to get a gen ed strand into CTG or ATIA. But I bet the good folks at Don Johnston would help if/when they do their national conference. I think strands would be great so it helps guide newbies where to go.

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Action Option 64: NO MONEY GRANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCALS

There is so much we can do without spending a dime on technology that could get more tech in the hands of students. There are classrooms that aren't using the tech they have to it's fullest and there are classrooms that aren't using the free stuff that's out there. Teachers have to have 5 days of PD. We need to slowly find a way to be appropriately involved in these trainings. A good model is to have the AT 'expert' work with teacher leaders in the locals. Then the teacher leader and the AT person team to work with other teachers. Don't perpetuate expert model but create more balance of strengths and team work. The 'grant' for the local has a focus on team building and coaching rather than tech tools. If money is spent it's reimbursing for subs.

Q: Could this actually be two topics? The grant issue, but also identification of teacher leaders in the locals?

A: Yes, I totally agree Michele, the ID of teacher leaders is very important and can be used for more than just what it is mentioned in the No \$ Grant. I will create a new post.

Q: I sense that teachers feel overloaded, what could be taken away to make room for this?

A: This is meant to make their life easier and more productive, not to add something to their plate. They have to have PD anyway, why not have the PD focus on stuff they already have or free stuff?

Action Option 65: EACH LOCAL DISTRICT NEEDS TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN ASSISTIVE TECH TEAM

Sometimes the personnel might be limited on the local teams but there needs to be a base of people to work from

Action Option 66: ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF GETTING ASSISTIVE TECH INFORMATION TO THE LOCALS

In Allegan, we don't have an established way to get AT information into the hands of the people who need it. I know there are still some people in Allegan who are doing AT with students and they are not aware of me and I'm not aware of them. I'm going to start by creating an AT listserve and ask my Spec ed directors and CD's who should be on the list. I'm hoping to discover other ways to get the info into the right hands but this is a good start for me. How does everyone else do it in the rural counties?

C: We too just react to situations rather than the locals knowing who I am and how I can help. If an issue comes up, the Sp. Ed. supervisor does contact me. Perhaps at all of the annual reviews, the supervisor should bring up at the beginning of the day, the issue of Assist. Tech.

Action Option 67: IDENTIFY TEACHER LEADERS IN THE LOCALS

Most local school districts have teachers meet in groups according to either grade levels (elementary) or content areas (highschool). In each group a teacher leader rises to the top and is typically the one that brings info back to their group. AT people need to find out who those teacher leaders are and cultivate a relationship with them so they can team with the teacher leader to bring info back to their group. This does not happen over night. It isn't always easy to work your way into the groups but they are key to getting info to more teachers.

C: Thank you for splitting your earlier contribution for clarification and manipulation of ideas in subsequent Rounds.